

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR"

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

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PRICE TWOPENCE.

IS HE POPENJOY?

BY ANTHONY TROLLOPE.

CHAPTER VIII. PUGSBY BROOK.

THERE was great talking about the old vixen as they all trotted away to Cross Hall Holt;—how it was the same old fox that they hadn't killed in a certain run last January, and how one old farmer was quite sure that this very fox was the one which had taken them that celebrated run to Bamham Moor three years ago, and how she had been the mother of quite a Priam's progeny of cubs. And now that she should have been killed in a stokehole! While this was going on a young lady rode up alongside of Mr. Price, and said a word to him with her sweetest smile.

"You remember your promise to me, Mr. Price?"

"Surely, Mrs. Houghton. Your nag can jump a few, no doubt."

"Beautifully. Mr. Houghton bought him from Lord Mountfencer. Lady Mountfencer couldn't ride him because he pulls a little. But he's a perfect hunter."

"We shall find him, Mrs. Houghton, to a moral; and do you stick to me. They generally go straight away to Thrupp's larches. You see the little wood. There's an old earth there, but that's stopped. There is only one fence between this and that, a biggish ditch, with a bit of a hedge on this side, but it's nothing to the horses when they're fresh."

"Mine's quite fresh."

"Then they mostly turn to the right for Pugsby; nothing but grass then for four miles ahead."

"And the jumping?"

"All fair. There's one bit of water,—Pugsby Brook,—that you ought to have, as he'll be sure to cross it ever so much above the bridge. But, lord love you, Mrs. Houghton, that horse'll think nothing of the brook."

"Nothing at all, Mr. Price. I like brooks."

"I'm afraid he's not here, Price," said Sir Simon, trotting round the cover towards the whip, who was stationed at the farther end.

"Well, Sir Simon, her as we killed came from the Holt, you know," said the farmer, mindful of his reputation for foxes. "You can't eat your cake and have it too, can you, Sir Simon?"

"Ought to be able in a cover like this."

"Well, perhaps we shall. The best lying is down in that corner. I've seen a brace of cubs together there a score of times." Then there was one short, low, dubious bark, and then another a little confirmed. "That's it, Sir Simon. There's your 'cake.'"

"Good hound, Blazer," cried Sir Simon, recognising the voice of his dog. And many of the pack recognised the well-known sound as plainly as the master, for you might hear the hounds rustling through the covert, as they hurried up to certify to the scent which their old leader had found for them. The Holt though thick was small, and a fox had not much chance but by breaking. Once up to covert and once back again the animal went, and then Dick, the watchful whip, holding his hand up to his face, holloaed him away. "Gently, gentlemen," shouted Sir Simon, "let them settle. Now, Mr. Bottomley, if you'll only keep yourself

a little steady, you'll find yourself the better for it at the finish." Mr. Bottomley was a young man from London, who was often addressed after this fashion, was always very unhappy for a few minutes, and then again forgot it in his excitement.

"Now, Mr. Price," said Mrs. Houghton, in a fever of expectation. She had been dodging backwards and forwards, trying to avoid her husband, and yet unwilling to leave the farmer's side.

"Wait a moment, ma'am; wait a moment. Now we're right; here to the left." So saying Mr. Price jumped over a low hedge, and Mrs. Houghton followed him, almost too closely. Mr. Houghton saw it, and didn't follow. He had made his way up, resolved to stop his wife, but she gave him the slip at the last moment. "Now through the gate, ma'am, and then on straight as an arrow for the little wood. I'll give you a lead over the ditch, but don't ride quite so close, ma'am." Then the farmer went away, feeling, perhaps, that his best chance of keeping clear from his too loving friend was to make the pace so fast, that she should not be able quite to catch him. But Lady Mountfencer's nag was fast too, was fast and had a will of his own. It was not without a cause that Lord Mountfencer had parted with so good a horse out of his stable. "Have a care, ma'am," said Price, as Mrs. Houghton cannoned against him as they both landed over the big ditch; "have a care, or we shall come to grief together. Just see me over before you let him take his jump." It was very good advice, and is very often given; but both ladies and gentlemen, whose hands are a little doubtful, sometimes find themselves unable to follow it. But now they were at Thrupp's larches. George Scruby had led the way, as becomes a huntsman, and a score or more had followed him over the big fence. Price had been going a little to the left, and when they reached the wood was as forward as anyone.

"He won't hang here, Sir Simon," said the farmer, as the master came up; "he never does."

"He's only a cub," said the master.

"The Holt cubs this time of the year are nigh as strong as old foxes. Now for Pugsby."

Mrs. Houghton looked round, fearing every moment that her husband would come up. They had just crossed a road, and wherever there was a road, there, she thought, he would certainly be.

"Can't we get round the other side, Mr. Price?" she said.

"You won't be any better nor here."

"But there's Mr. Houghton on the road," she whispered.

"Oh-h-h!" ejaculated the farmer, just touching the end of his nose with his finger, and moving gently on through the wood. "Never spoil sport," was the motto of his life, and to his thinking it was certainly sport, that a young wife should ride to hounds in opposition to an old husband. Mrs. Houghton followed him, and as they got out on the other side, the fox was again away. "He ain't making for Pugsby's after all," said Price to George Scruby.

"He don't know that country yet," said the huntsman. "He'll be back in them Manor Cross woods. You'll see else."

The park of Manor Cross lay to the left of them, whereas Pugsby and the desirable grass country away to Bamham Moor were all to the right. Some men, mindful of the big brook and knowing the whereabouts of the bridge, among whom was Mr. Houghton, kept very much to the right, and were soon out of the run altogether. But the worst of it was that though they were not heading for their good country, still there was the brook, Pugsby Brook, to be taken. Had the fox done as he ought to have done, and made for Pugsby itself, the leap would have been from grass to grass; but now it must be from plough to plough, if taken at all. It need hardly be said that the two things are very different. Sir Simon, when he saw how the land lay, took a lane leading down to the Brotherton road. If the fox were making for the park he must be right in that direction. It is not often that a master of hounds rides for glory, and Sir Simon had long since left all that to younger men. But there were still a dozen riders pressing on, and among them were the farmer and his devoted follower,—and a gentleman in black.

Let us give praise where praise is due, and acknowledge that young Bottomley was the first at the brook,—and the first over it. As soon as he was beyond Sir Simon's notice he had scurried on across the plough, and being both light and indiscreet, had enjoyed the heartfelt pleasure of passing George Scruby. George, who hated Mr. Bottomley, grunted out his malediction, even though no one could hear him. "He'll soon be at the bottom of that," said George, meaning to imply

in horsey phrase that the rider, if he rode over ploughed ground after that fashion, would soon come to the end of his steed's power. But Bottomley, if he could only be seen to jump the big brook before anyone else, would have happiness enough for a month. To have done a thing that he could talk about was the charm that Bottomley found in hunting. Alas, though he rode gallantly at the brook and did get over it, there was not much to talk about; for, unfortunately, he left his horse behind him in the water. The poor beast going with a rush off the plough, came with his neck and shoulders against the opposite bank, and shot his rider well on to the dry land.

"That's about as good as a dead 'un," said George, as he landed a yard or two to the right. This was ill-natured, and the horse, in truth, was not hurt. But a rider, at any rate a young rider, should not take a lead from a huntsman unless he is very sure of himself, of his horse, and of the run of the hounds. The next man over was the gentleman in black, who took it in a stand, and who really seemed to know what he was about. There were some who afterwards asserted that this was the dean, but the dean was never heard to boast of the performance.

Mrs. Houghton's horse was going very strong with her. More than once the farmer cautioned her to give him a pull over the plough. And she attempted to obey the order. But the horse was self-willed, and she was light; and in truth the heaviness of the ground would have been nothing to him had he been fairly-well ridden. But she allowed him to rush with her through the mud. As she had never yet had an accident she knew nothing of fear, and she was beyond measure excited. She had been near enough to see that a man fell at the brook, and then she saw also that the huntsman got over, and also the gentleman in black. It seemed to her to be lovely. The tumble did not scare her at all, as others coming after the unfortunate one had succeeded. She was aware that there were three or four other men behind her, and she was determined that they should not pass her. They should see that she also could jump the river. She had not rid herself of her husband for nothing. Price, as he came near the water, knew that he had plenty to do, and knew also how very close to him the woman was. It was too late now to speak to her again,

but he did not fear for his own horse if she would only give him room. He steadied the animal a yard or two from the margin, as he came to the headland that ran down the side of the brook, and then took his leap.

But Mrs. Houghton rode as though the whole thing was to be accomplished by a rush, and her horse, true to the manner of horses, insisted on following in the direct track of the one who had led him so far. When he got to the bank he made his effort to jump high, but he had got no footing for a fair spring. On he went, however, and struck Price's horse on the quarter so violently as to upset that animal, as well as himself.

Price, who was a thoroughly good horseman, was knocked off, but got on to the bank as Bottomley had done. The two animals were both in the brook, and when the farmer was able to look round, he saw that the lady was out of sight. He was in the water immediately himself, but before he made the plunge he had resolved that he never again would give a lady a lead, till he knew whether she could ride.

Mr. Knox and Dick were soon on the spot, and Mrs. Houghton was extracted. "I'm blessed if she ain't dead," said the whip, pale as death himself. "Hush!" said Mr. Knox; "she's not dead, but I'm afraid she's hurt." Price had come back through the water with the woman in his arms, and the two horses were still floundering about unattended. "It's her shoulder, Mr. Knox," said Price. "The horse has jammed her against the bank under water." During this time her head was drooping, and her eyes were closed, and she was apparently senseless. "Do you look to the horses, Dick; - there ain't no reason why they should get their death of cold." By this time there were a dozen men round them, and Dick and others were able to attend to the ill-used nags. "Yes; it's her shoulder," continued Price. "That's out, any way. What the mischief will Mr. Houghton say to me when he comes up?"

There is always a doctor in the field,—sent there by some benignity of Providence,—who always rides forward enough to be near to accidents, but never so forward as to be in front of them. It has been hinted that this arrangement is professional rather than providential; but the present writer, having given his mind to the investigation of the matter, is inclined to

think that it arises from the general fitness of things. All public institutions have, or ought to have, their doctor; but in no institution is the doctor so invariably at hand, just when he is wanted, as in the hunting-field. A very skilful young surgeon from Brotherton was on the spot almost as soon as the lady was out of the water, and declared that she had dislocated her shoulder.

What was to be done? Her hat had gone; she had been under the water; she was covered with mud; she was still senseless, and of course she could neither ride nor walk. There were ever so many suggestions. Price thought that she had better be taken back to Cross Hall, which was about a mile and a half distant. Mr. Knox, who knew the country, told them of a side gate in the Manor Cross wall, which made the great house nearer than the Cross Hall. They could get her there in a little over a mile. But how to get her there? They must find a door on which to carry her. First a hurdle was suggested, and then Dick was sent galloping up to the house for a carriage. In the meantime she was carried to a labourer's cottage by the roadside on a hurdle, and there the party was joined by Sir Simon and Mr. Houghton.

"It's all your fault," said the husband, coming up to Price as though he meant to strike him with his whip. "Part of it is, no doubt, sir," said Price, looking his assailant full in the face, but almost sobbing as he spoke, "and I'm very unhappy about it." Then the husband went and hung over his wife; but his wife, when she saw him, found it convenient to faint again.

At about two o'clock the cortége with the carriage reached the great house. Sir Simon, after expressions of deep sorrow, had of course gone on after his hounds. Mr. Knox, as belonging to Manor Cross, and Price, and, of course, the doctor, with Mr. Houghton and Mr. Houghton's groom, accompanied the carriage. When they got to the door all the ladies were there to receive them. "I don't think we want to see anything more of you," said Mr. Houghton to the farmer. The poor man turned round and went away home alone, feeling himself to be thoroughly disgraced. "After all," he said to himself, "if you come to fault, it was she nigh killed me, not me her. How was I to know she didn't know nothing about it?"

"Now, Mary, I think you'll own that I

was right," Lord George said to his wife, as soon as the sufferer had been put quietly to bed.

"Ladies don't always break their arms," said Mary.

"It might have been you as well as Mrs. Houghton."

"As I didn't go, you need not scold me, George."

"But you were discontented because you were prevented," said he, determined to have the last word.

CHAPTER IX. MRS. HOUGHTON.

LADY SARAH, who was generally regarded as the arbiter of the very slender hospitalities exercised at Manor Cross, was not at all well pleased at being forced to entertain Mrs. Houghton, whom she especially disliked; but, circumstanced as they were, there was no alternative. She had been put to bed with a dislocated arm, and had already suffered much in having it reduced, before the matter could be even discussed. And then it was of course felt that she could not be turned out of the house. She was not only generally hurt, but she was a cousin also. "We must ask him, mamma," Lady Sarah said. The marchioness whined piteously. Mr. Houghton's name had always been held in great displeasure by the ladies at Manor Cross. "I don't think we can help it. Mr. Sawyer"—Mr. Sawyer was the very clever young surgeon from Brotherton—"Mr. Sawyer says that she ought not to be removed for, at any rate, a week." The marchioness groaned. But the evil became less than had been anticipated by Mr. Houghton's refusal. At first he seemed inclined to stay; but after he had seen his wife he declared that, as there was no danger, he would not intrude upon Lady Brotherton, but would, if permitted, ride over and see how his wife was progressing on the morrow. "That is a relief," said Lady Sarah to her mother; and yet Lady Sarah had been almost urgent in assuring Mr. Houghton that they would be delighted to have him.

In spite of her suffering, which must have been real, and her fainting, which had partly been so, Mrs. Houghton had had force enough to tell her husband that he would himself be inexpressibly bored by remaining at Manor Cross, and that his presence would inexpressibly bore "all those dowdy old women," as she called the ladies of the house. "Besides, what's the use?" she said; "I've got to lie here

for a certain time. You would not be any good at nursing. You'd only kill yourself with ennui. I shall do well enough, and do you go on with your hunting." He had assented; but finding her to be well enough to express her opinion as to the desirability of his absence strongly, thought that she was well enough, also, to be rebuked for her late disobedience. He began, therefore, to say a word. "Oh Jeffrey! are you going to scold me?" she said, "while I am in such a state as this!" and then again she almost fainted. He knew that he was being ill-treated, but knowing also that he could not avoid it, he went away without a further word.

But she was quite cheerful that evening when Lady George came up to give her her dinner. She had begged that it might be so. She had known "dear Mary" so long, and was so warmly attached to her. "Dear Mary" did not dislike the occupation, which was soon found to comprise that of being head-nurse to the invalid. She had never especially loved Adelaide De Baron, and had felt that there was something amiss in her conversation when they had met at the Deanery; but she was brighter than the ladies at Manor Cross, was affectionate in her manner, and was at any rate young. There was an antiquity about everything at Manor Cross, which was already crushing the spirit of the young bride.

"Dear me! this is nice," said Mrs. Houghton, disregarding, apparently, altogether the pain of her shoulder; "I declare, I shall begin to be glad of the accident."

"You shouldn't say that."

"Why not, if I feel it? Doesn't it seem like a thing in a story that I should be brought to Lord George's house, and that he was my lover only quite the other day?" The idea had never occurred to Mary, and now that it was suggested to her, she did not like it. "I wonder when he'll come and see me. It would not make you jealous, I hope."

"Certainly not."

"No, indeed. I think he's quite as much in love with you as ever he was with me. And yet he was very, very fond of me once. Isn't it odd that men should change so?"

"I suppose you are changed too," said Mary, hardly knowing what to say.

"Well,—yes,—no. I don't know that I'm changed at all. I never told Lord George that I loved him. And what's more, I never told Mr. Houghton so. I

don't pretend to be very virtuous, and of course I married for an income. I like him very well, and I always mean to be good to him; that is if he lets me have my own way. I'm not going to be scolded, and he need not think so."

"You oughtn't to have gone on to-day, ought you?"

"Why not? If my horse hadn't gone so very quick, and Mr. Price at that moment hadn't gone so very slow, I shouldn't have come to grief, and nobody would have known anything about it. Wouldn't you like to ride?"

"Yes; I should like it. But are not you exerting yourself too much?"

"I should die if I were made to lie here without speaking to anyone. Just put the pillow a little under me. Now I'm all right. Who do you think was going as well as anybody yesterday? I saw him."

"Who was it?"

"The Very Reverend the Dean of Brotherton, my dear."

"No!"

"But he was. I saw him jump the brook just before I fell into it. What will Mr. Groschut say?"

"I don't think papa cares much what Mr. Groschut says."

"And the bishop?"

"I'm not sure that he cares very much for the bishop either. But I am quite sure that he would not do anything that he thought to be wrong."

"A dean never does, I suppose."

"My papa never does."

"Nor Lord George, I daresay," said Mrs. Houghton.

"I don't say anything about Lord George. I haven't known him quite so long."

"If you won't speak up for him, I will. I'm quite sure Lord George Gernain never in his life did anything that he ought not to do. That's his fault. Don't you like men who do what they ought not to do?"

"No," said Mary, "I don't. Everybody always ought to do what they ought to do. And you ought to go to sleep, and so I shall go away." She knew that it was not all right,—that there was something fast, and also something vulgar, about this self-appointed friend of hers. But though Mrs. Houghton was fast, and though she was vulgar, she was a relief to the endless gloom of Manor Cross.

On the next day Mr. Houghton came,

explaining to everybody that he had given up his day's hunting for the sake of his wife. But he could say but little, and could do nothing, and he did not remain long. "Don't stay away from the meet another day," his wife said to him; "I shan't get well any the sooner, and I don't like being a drag upon you." Then the husband went away, and did not come for the next two days. On the Sunday he came over in the afternoon and stayed for half an hour, and on the following Tuesday he appeared on his way to the meet in top-boots and a red coat. He was, upon the whole, less troublesome to the Manor Cross people than might have been expected.

Mr. Price came every morning to enquire, and very gracious passages passed between him and the lady. On the Saturday she was up, sitting on a sofa in a dressing-gown, and he was brought in to see her. "It was all my fault, Mr. Price," she said immediately. "I heard what Mr. Houghton said to you; I couldn't speak then, but I was so sorry."

"What a husband says, ma'am, at such a time, goes for nothing."

"What a husband says, Mr. Price, very often does go for nothing." He turned his hat in his hand, and smiled. "If it had not been so all this wouldn't have happened, and I shouldn't have upset you into the water. But, all the same, I hope you'll give me a lead another day, and I'll take great care not to come so close to you again." This pleased Mr. Price so much that, as he went home, he swore to himself that, if ever she asked him again, he would do just the same as he had done on the day of the accident.

When Price the farmer had seen her, of course it became Lord George's duty to pay her his compliments in person. At first he visited her in company with his wife and Lady Sarah, and the conversation was very stiff. Lady Sarah was potent enough to quell even Mrs. Houghton. But later in the afternoon Lord George came back again, his wife being in the room, and then there was a little more ease. "You can't think how it grieves me," she said, "to bring all this trouble upon you." She emphasised the word "you," as though to show him that she cared nothing for his mother and sisters.

"It is no trouble to me," said Lord George, bowing low. "I should say that it was a pleasure, were it not that your

presence here is attended with so much pain to yourself."

"The pain is nothing," said Mrs. Houghton. "I have hardly thought of it. It is much more than compensated by the renewal of my intimacy with Lady George Germain." This she said with her very prettiest manner, and he told himself that she was indeed very pretty.

Lady George,—or Mary, as we will still call her, for simplicity, in spite of her promotion,—had become somewhat afraid of Mrs. Houghton; but now, seeing her husband's courtesy to her guest, understanding from his manner that he liked her society, began to thaw, and to think that she might allow herself to be intimate with the woman. It did not occur to her to be in any degree jealous,—not, at least, as yet. In her innocence she did not think it possible that her husband's heart should be untrue to her, nor did it occur to her that such a one as Mrs. Houghton could be preferred to herself. She thought that she knew herself to be better than Mrs. Houghton, and she certainly thought herself to be the better-looking of the two.

Mrs. Houghton's beauty, such as it was, depended mainly on style; on a certain dash and manner which she had acquired, and which to another woman were not attractive. Mary knew that she herself was beautiful. She could not but know it. She had been brought up by all belonging to her with that belief; and so believing, had taught herself to acknowledge that no credit was due to herself on that score. Her beauty now belonged entirely to her husband. There was nothing more to be done with it, except to maintain her husband's love, and that, for the present, she did not in the least doubt. She had heard of married men falling in love with other people's wives, but she did not in the least bring home the fact to her own case.

In the course of that afternoon all the ladies of the family sat for a time with their guest. First came Lady Sarah and Lady Susanna. Mrs. Houghton, who saw very well how the land lay, rather snubbed Lady Sarah. She had nothing to fear from the dragon of the family. Lady Sarah, in spite of their cousinship, had called her Mrs. Houghton, and Mrs. Houghton in return called the other Lady Sarah. There was to be no intimacy, and she was only received there because of her dislocated shoulder. Let it be so. Lord George and his wife were coming up to

town, and the intimacy should be there. She certainly would not wish to repeat her visit to Manor Cross.

"Some ladies do like hunting, and some don't," she said, in answer to a severe remark from Lady Sarah. "I am one of those who do, and I don't think an accident like that has anything to do with it."

"I can't say I think it an amusement fit for ladies," said Lady Sarah.

"I suppose ladies may do what clergymen do. The dean jumped over the brook just before me." There was not much of an argument in this, but Mrs. Houghton knew that it would vex Lady Sarah, because of the alliance between the dean and the Manor Cross family.

"She's a detestable young woman," Lady Sarah said to her mother, "and I can only hope that Mary won't see much of her up in town."

"I don't see how she can, after what there has been between her and George," said the innocent old lady. In spite, however, of this strongly expressed opinion, the old lady made her visit, taking Lady Amelia with her. "I hope, my dear, you find yourself getting better."

"So much better, Lady Brotherton! But I am sorry to have given you all this trouble; but it has been very pleasant to me to be here, and to see Lord George and Mary together. I declare I think hers is the sweetest face I ever looked upon. And she is so much improved. That's what perfect happiness does. I do so like her."

"We love her very dearly," said the marchioness.

"I am sure you do. And he is so proud of her!" Lady Sarah had said that the woman was detestable, and therefore the marchioness felt that she ought to detest her. But, had it not been for Lady Sarah, she would have been rather pleased with her guest than otherwise. She did not remain very long, but promised that she would return on the next day.

On the following morning Mr. Houghton came again, staying only a few minutes; and while he was in his wife's sitting-room, both Lord George and Mary found them. As they were all leaving her together, she contrived to say a word to her old love. "Don't desert me all the morning. Come and talk to me a bit. I am well now, though they won't let me move about." In obedience to this sum-

mons, he returned to her when his wife was called upon to attend to the ordinary cloak and petticoat conclave of the other ladies. In regard to these charitable meetings she had partly carried her own way. She had so far thrown off the authority as to make it understood that she was not to be bound by the rules which her sisters-in-law had laid down for their own guidance. But her rebellion had not been complete, and she still gave them a certain number of weekly stitches. Lord George had said nothing of this purpose; but for a full hour before luncheon he was alone with Mrs. Houghton. If a gentleman may call on a lady in her house, surely he may, without scandal, pay her a visit in his own. That a married man should chat for an hour with another man's wife in a country house is not much. Where is the man and where the woman who has not done that, quite as a matter of course? And yet when Lord George knocked at the door, there was a feeling on him that he was doing something in which he would not wish to be detected. "This is so good of you," she said. "Do sit down; and don't run away. Your mother and sisters have been here—so nice of them, you know; but everybody treats me as though I oughtn't to open my mouth for above five minutes at a time. I feel as though I should like to jump the brook again immediately."

"Pray don't do that."

"Well, no; not quite yet. You don't like hunting, I'm afraid?"

"The truth is," said Lord George, "that I've never been able to afford to keep horses."

"Ah, that's a reason. Mr. Houghton, of course, is a rich man; but I don't know anything so little satisfactory in itself as being rich."

"It is comfortable."

"Oh yes, it is comfortable; but so unsatisfactory! Of course Mr. Houghton can keep any number of horses; but what's the use, when he never rides to hounds? Better not have them at all, I think. I am very fond of hunting myself."

"I daresay I should have liked it had it come in my way early in life."

"You speak of yourself as if you were a hundred years old. I know your age exactly. You are just seventeen years younger than Mr. Houghton!" To this Lord George had no reply to make. Of course he had felt that when Miss De

Baron had married Mr. Houghton she had married quite an old man. "I wonder whether you were much surprised when you heard that I was engaged to Mr. Houghton?"

"I was, rather."

"Because he is so old?"

"Not that altogether."

"I was surprised myself, and I knew that you would be. But what was I to do?"

"I think you have been very wise," said Lord George.

"Yes, but you think I have been heartless. I can see it in your eyes and hear it in your voice. Perhaps I was heartless; —but then I was bound to be wise. A man may have a profession before him. He may do anything. But what has a girl to think of? You say that money is comfortable."

"Certainly it is."

"How is she to get it, if she has not got it of her own, like dear Mary?"

"You do not think that I have blamed you."

"But even though you have not, yet I must excuse myself to you," she said with energy, bending forward from her sofa towards him. "Do you think that I do not know the difference?"

"What difference?"

"Ah, you shouldn't ask. I may hint at it, but you shouldn't ask. But it wouldn't have done, would it?" Lord George hardly understood what it was that wouldn't have done; but he knew that a reference was being made to his former love by the girl he had loved; and, upon the whole, he rather liked it. The flattery of such intrigues is generally pleasant to men, even when they cannot bring their minds about quick enough to understand all the little ins and outs of the woman's manoeuvres. "It is my very nature to be extravagant. Papa has brought me up like that. And yet I had nothing that I could call my own. I had no right to marry anyone but a rich man. You said just now you couldn't afford to hunt."

"I never could."

"And I couldn't afford to have a heart. You said just now, too, that money is very comfortable. There was a time when I should have found it very, very comfortable to have had a fortune of my own."

"You have plenty."

She wasn't angry with him, because she had already found out that it is the nature

of men to be slow. And she wasn't angry with him, again, because, though he was slow, yet also was he evidently gratified. "Yes," she said, "I have plenty now. I have secured so much. I couldn't have done without a large income; but a large income doesn't make me happy. It's like eating and drinking. One has to eat and drink, but yet one doesn't care very much about it. Perhaps you don't regret hunting very much?"

"Yes, I do, because it enables a man to know his neighbours."

"I know that I regret the thing I couldn't afford."

Then a glimmer of what she meant did come across him, and he blushed. "Things will not always turn out as they are wanted," he said. Then his conscience upbraided him, and he corrected himself. "But, Heaven knows that I have no reason to complain. I have been fortunate."

"Yes, indeed."

"I sometimes think it is better to remember the good things we have than to regret those that are gone."

"That is excellent philosophy, Lord George. And therefore I go out hunting, and break my bones, and fall into rivers, and ride about with such men as Mr. Price. One has to make the best of it, hasn't one? But you, I see, have no regrets."

He paused for a moment, and then found himself driven to make some attempt at gallantry. "I didn't quite say that," he replied.

"You are able to re-establish yourself according to your own tastes. A man can always do so. I was obliged to take whatever came. I think that Mary is so nice."

"I think so too, I can assure you."

"You have been very fortunate to find such a girl; so innocent, so pure, so pretty, and with a fortune too. I wonder how much difference it would have made in your happiness if you had seen her before we had ever been acquainted. I suppose we should never have known each other then."

"Who can say?"

"No; no one can say. For myself, I own that I like it better as it is. I have something to remember that I can be proud of."

"And I something to be ashamed of."

"To be ashamed of!" she said, almost rising in anger.

"That you should have refused me!"

She had got it at last. She had made her fish rise to the fly. "Oh no," she said, "there can be nothing of that. If I did not tell you plainly then, I tell you plainly now. I should have done very wrong to marry a poor man."

"I ought not to have asked you."

"I don't know how that may be," she said, in a very low voice, looking down to the ground. "Some say that if a man loves he should declare his love, let the circumstances be what they may. I rather think that I agree with them. You at any rate knew that I felt greatly honoured, though the honour was out of my reach." Then there was a pause, during which he could find nothing to say. He was trapped by her flattery, but he did not wish to betray his wife by making love to the woman. He liked her words and her manner, but he was aware that she was a thing sacred as being another man's wife. "But it is all better as it is," she said with a laugh, "and Mary Lovelace is the happiest girl of her year. I am so glad you are coming to London, and I do so hope you'll come and see me."

"Certainly I will."

"I mean to be such friends with Mary. There is no woman I like so much. And then circumstances have thrown us together, haven't they? and if she and I are friends, real friends, I shall feel that our friendship may be continued,—yours and mine. I don't mean that all this accident shall go for nothing. I wasn't quite clever enough to contrive it; but I am very glad of it, because it has brought us once more together, so that we may understand each other. Good-bye, Lord George. Don't let me keep you longer now. I wouldn't have Mary jealous, you know."

"I don't think there is the least fear of that," he said in real displeasure.

"Don't take me up seriously for my little joke," she said, as she put out her hand. He took it, and once more smiled, and then left her.

When she was alone there came a feeling on her that she had gone through some hard work with only moderate success; and also a feeling that the game was hardly worth the candle. She was not in the least in love with the man, or capable of being in love with any man. In a certain degree she was jealous, and felt that she owed Mary Lovelace a turn for having so speedily won her own

rejected lover. But her jealousy was not strong enough for absolute malice. She had formed no plot against the happiness of the husband and wife when she came into the house; but the plot made itself, and she liked the excitement. He was heavy, certainly heavy, but he was very handsome, and a lord; and then, too, it was much in her favour that he certainly had once loved her dearly.

Lord George, as he went down to lunch, felt himself to be almost guilty, and hardly did more than creep into the room where his wife and sisters were seated.

"Have you been with Mrs. Houghton?" asked Lady Sarah, in a firm voice.

"Yes, I have been sitting with her for the last half hour," he replied; but he couldn't answer the question without hesitation in his manner. Mary, however, thought nothing about it.

WESTMINSTER SCHOOL.

By a series of coincidences, of such strikingly regular recurrence that they might almost be supposed to hint at the development of a natural law, our great schools have acquired in the course of the last decade quite an exceptional degree of periodic prominence. It would seem, indeed, as if the institutions which compose our higher scholastic system had been describing a species of revolution, at certain points in which they were compelled to show themselves full in the fierce light of that publicity, which brings out in such fatal relief everything of the nature of abuse or defect.

The movement was commenced by Rugby. For the space of two years and upwards the troubles which agitated the school of Arnold were one of the burning questions of the day, and the interests of Rugby as a school suffered in proportion as the quarrels of its masters became famous. But Rugby was not permitted to monopolise public attention. At intervals, while the great Rugby battles were still raging, Eton, Harrow, Winchester, and, indeed, almost every other school of any pretension, were the scenes of incidents that called for comment and protest. Some of these related to the inner life and discipline of the schools; others followed on the relations which were found to exist between governing bodies, head-masters, and under-masters. Eton was the theatre of disturbances of both kinds. House-

masters increased their fees, parents wrote to the newspapers; partial and impartial journalists contributed leading articles on the subject. Then came the question whether the head-master of Eton, the successor of John Keate—shade of Keate! how the idea of such a question being raised would have raised the wrath of the academic autocrat—had or had not the power of dismissing his subordinates at will. The occasion was seized upon by a host of writers, and many homilies, more or less—for the most part less—relevant to the immediate issue, were preached in the newspapers on Eton generally; the extravagance, the indolence, the luxury, the ignorance of the place.

Meanwhile other seats of learning were not unsuccessfully asserting their several claims to notoriety. Winchester had both troubles and scandals, and took the public into its confidence on the subject of each. There was the great “tunding” case, and the interest of this had hardly died away when one or two sentences of alleged arbitrary expulsion once again conferred notoriety upon the school of Wykeham. The atmosphere of Harrow had not been undisturbed, but the authorities of Harrow displayed a good deal of cleverness in keeping their troubles and difficulties to themselves.

Uppingham School was destined to witness the breaking of the storm in a very sinister and disastrous way. Fever appeared. There was the usual discussion in the public journals, there was a sanitary enquiry, and a temporary migration of the school bodily to the coast of North Wales was the result.

The newer educational foundations were reminded that they were not exempt from the operation of the law of academic disturbances, but the instances already cited are enough to show that the ancient college of St. Peter's, Westminster, cannot justly complain if it finds itself involved in the din of controversy; and that if the opportunity is taken by critics of overhauling it generally, that famous and venerable seminary is but sharing the common lot of schools. The history and successive stages of the discussion are exceedingly simple. The statement went abroad, couched as it was in the most authoritative language, that Westminster School was about to be removed from Westminster. It was immediately contradicted; and the contradiction was followed by the array of all

the arguments for and against removal, in the columns of two or three of the chief organs of public opinion. The arguments for removal consisted of an enumeration of defects, real or imaginary, in the school as it now is. Laxity of discipline, neglect on the part of the masters, failure on the part of the scholars to distinguish themselves at the university or elsewhere, the unhealthiness of the spot; these were each of them in turn dwelt upon as fatal blemishes on the Westminster scutcheon, which it was necessary to remove at once, and which could only be removed by the translation of the school from its historic home to some new rural abode. It is not necessary or desirable here to follow the dispute into its details. Probably the decision which the public has arrived at is that the case against Westminster is not proven. It is likely enough that if the pious founder were now to establish and endow a school of the character of Westminster, he would not stipulate for a spot under the shadow of the Houses of Parliament. But the genius of Westminster may be regarded as having been consulted, and as having given utterance to a sentiment like that which fell from the graven images of the tutelary deities of ancient Rome, when it was contemplated to shift the site of the Italian capital: “It is better to remain here.” It has been shown that the school in its present abode is not unhealthy, that proper discipline within its precincts can be and is preserved, that it satisfies the requirements of the capital in a manner which could not be attained were its site to be changed. The academic distinctions achieved in the last few years by old Westminsters are not, indeed, as numerous as might be wished. They are, however, on the increase; and there is no reason to suppose that the rate of increase would be magically accelerated if the revolution on which the partisans of change are bent were an accomplished fact. To most persons it would seem that the removal of Westminster to a London suburb, or to a provincial neighbourhood more remote, would be not only an act of iconoclasm, but of gross injustice to the inhabitants of the metropolis. Half-boarders and home-boarders exist at Westminster to a degree not known at other great public schools. A half-boarder who dines at the school four days a week, pays rather less than fifty pounds a year; a home-boarder about half that sum; and these boys, an extremely rare thing in the case of public school day-

boys, may be said to enjoy the entire advantages of the school.

As Westminster is an institution which has distinct traditions of its own, so has it preserved throughout its varying fortunes a certain special tone which is creditable to the place, its associations, and its scholars. The social influences of a great school are as valuable in their way as the educational; they would be jeopardised and probably destroyed if the process of transplantation were carried out. Westminster School is the proper appendage of the famous abbey. It has contributed to swell the list of English statesmen, divines, scholars, and men of letters in a very appreciable degree, because it stands where it does, because its locality is an inspiring one, because Westminster boys are in the centre of ennobling memories, because they are free of the gallery in the House of Commons, because they form an integral part of the foundation in whose visible fabric the great temple of "reconciliation and silence," as Macaulay has termed it, otherwise our national Walhalla, is the chief feature. Like Eton, Westminster is a royal school; and what Windsor Castle is to Eton, that the "ancient palace and court of Westminster" are to the school of Westminster. Imagine Eton divorced from the playing-fields, from the Brocas, from the ancestral dwelling-place of English monarchy; imagine Harrow without its hill, and one has a fair idea of what Westminster School would be without Westminster. It is conceivable that there might be objections to its continuance in its present habitation, so overwhelming that removal would be absolutely necessary. The waters of the Thames might exhale, as they once did, a subtle and pestiferous miasma. It might be impossible to effect the necessary hygienic arrangements subject to the conditions of space imposed by a situation in a city. The number of boys might be in excess of the accommodation afforded, and it might be out of the question to increase that accommodation without an exodus. Some of these arguments did apply to the case of the Charterhouse; they do apply strongly—more strongly than to Charterhouse—in the case of Christ's Hospital. When the latter is removed to the country, it will not be a question of any violent or unnatural solution in the continuity of the life or the traditions of the school; it would simply be an emancipation of seven hundred boys from the house of bondage—the addition to the educational

machinery of the school of that machinery of recreation and sport, playground, and cricket-fields, without which the theory and practice of English school education are incomplete. None of these reasons can be advanced in connection with Westminster. The situation of the school may not, as has been allowed, be one of ideal perfection, but it is an essential part of its life; and to divest it of the character which it derives from that situation, would be to break needlessly with the past history of the place, to inflict a wrong on the parents of boys whose home is London, and to rob the capital of the empire of an institution which is the only one of the kind that it possesses.

"I heard and saw," writes John Evelyn in his Diary, under date May 13, 1661, "such exercises at the election of scholars at Westminster School, to be sent to the university, in Latin, Greek, Hebrew, and Arabic, in themes and extemporary verses, as wonderfully astonished me in such youths, with such readiness, and with some of them not above twelve or thirteen years of age. Pity it is that what they attain here so rapidly, they either do not retain or do not improve more considerably when they come to be men, though many of them do; and no less is to be blamed their odd pronouncing of Latin, so that out of England none were able to understand or endure it." The pronunciation of the Latin language, it may be observed, remains at Westminster what it was in the days of Mr. Pepys, though some schools have adopted a change in the direction, which the diarist would have approved. As to his criticisms on the absence of any progress in classical literature on the part of old Westminsters when manhood has been reached, it is a charge which seems scarcely to be borne out by facts. In pure scholarship and letters, the achievements and fame of old Westminsters may challenge comparison with those of the alumni of any other school. Nine archbishops head the roll of Westminster distinctions—the two latest being Vernon Harcourt, Archbishop of York, and the late primate, Dr. Langley. In addition, sixty old Westminsters have in the fulness of time attained to the honour of the episcopal bench; brief mention of some of whom, in order that they may indicate the character of the rest, may be made. The first on the list is Cabot, Bishop of Norwich, the "jolly Bishop" of Norwich, described by Thomas Fuller as

"of a courteous courage, and no destructive nature to any who offended him, counting himself plentifully repaid with a jest." One who was joint author with the royal penman, to whom the work is generally and extensively attributed, of the *Eikon Basilike*—Dupper, of Winchester, was an old Westminster. So too was Morley, also of Winchester, chaplain of Charles the First, and a powerful instrument in the restoration of Charles the Second. Trelawney, one of the seven prelates imprisoned; Atherbury, the greatest ecclesiastical pamphleteer of his age, the friend of Pope, Swift, Arbuthnot, and Gay, the most brilliant scholar of his university; Isaac Barrow, perhaps the best preacher, and the most massive theologian whom the Church of England has produced; Humphrey Prideaux, of Norwich; Goodenough, of Bristol, whose sermons as chaplain to the House of Peers elicited the epigram :

'Twas well enough that Goodenough before the Lords
should preach,
For sure enough they're bad enough for Goodenough
to teach.

—Westminster has the honour of having trained all these. Among authors—Ben Jonson; Hakluyt; Will Cartwright, of whom Dr. Fell, the head-master of Westminster, and an old Westminster, declared that he was "the utmost man can come to;" Cowley; George Herbert; Nat Lee; Dryden; John Locke, most distinguished of the pupils of the distinguished Busby; Vincent Bourne; Bonnel Thornton, translator of Plautus; Gibbon; Cowper; Horne Tooke; Robert Southey; were all of them old Westminsters. In the department of law and statesmanship, the school has been not less famous and fortunate. In proof of this, may be cited the names of William Murray; Earl Mansfield; Sir Francis Buller; Sir David Dundas; the younger Vane, of whom Milton has written :

Young in years, but in sage counsel old,
Than whom no better senator e'er held
The Roman helm :—

Pulteney, Earl of Bath; Warren Hastings; the late Marquis of Lansdowne; the late Sir James Graham; and the present Earl Russell. Of the seven officers not being of royal blood, who rose to the rank of field-marshal between 1810 and 1856, five were brought up at Westminster—Henry Paget, Marquis of Anglesey; Thomas Grosvenor; John Byng, Lord

Strafford; Stapleton Cotton, Lord Combermere; Fitzroy Somerset, Lord Raglan.

Of the traditions and practices which are specially identified with Westminster, the Latin drama, performed at the close of the winter term, is the chief. There are two others which may just be named—the tossing of the pancake by the cook, on Shrove Tuesday, over the boundary line which divides the upper from the lower school; and the "challenges," a survival, of course, of the old scholastic disputations of mediæval times. The average annual number of vacancies for places in college is ten. The two lowest boys come up before the head-master, having prepared a certain portion of Greek epigram and Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. The lower of the two boys is the challenger, and calls on the boy challenged to translate the passage; and, if he can detect and correct any fault in the translation, he takes the upper boy's place. The "helps" stand by during the contest, and act as counsel to their "men," in case of any doubt arising as to the correctness of a question or answer; and the head-master sits as moderator, and decides the point in dispute. The boy who at the end of the challenge is found to have finally retained his place, can subsequently challenge the boy next above him in the list of candidates for admission, and may thus fight his way up through the roll of competitors. The struggle frequently extends over six to eight weeks, and the ten who are highest at its close obtain admission to the foundation in the order in which they stand.

But the institution best known to the outside world in connection with Westminster is the Terentian or Plantine drama, played towards the close of every December, by the Queen's scholars, in the College dormitory. A passage through a series of compartments on either side, separated from each other by thin partition boards, the beds being concealed by curtains hanging in front of every little closet, conducts the visitor to the chamber that does duty as a playhouse. On the walls are painted the names of past Westminster boys for many a generation back, and among these, till within some thirty years since, the name of John Dryden was clearly visible. The Westminster Play itself is as much a relic of ancient days as the Shrove-Tuesday pancake, and must obviously be referred to the dramatic celebrations which used to mark certain

festivals of the church, or possibly to the custom which once existed in schools and colleges of greeting the king or queen with music and interludes. It is matter of history that Queen Elizabeth was greatly gratified with the performance of the *Adelphi* of Terence, which she witnessed at Westminster, and expressed her desire that the usage might be maintained, "for the better accustoming of the boys to correct action and elocution." The letters of the most eminent of old Westminsters teem with allusions to the Westminster Play. Atterbury, when Dean of Christchurch, wrote to Trelawney, Bishop of Winchester, with many expressions of the satisfaction he had experienced at the performance of his lordship's son of the part of Antipho in the *Phormio*. "Mr. Trelawney played Antipho extremely well, and some parts he performed admirably. Your lordship may depend upon it that, in what place soever he stands, he shall go first of the election to Oxford, and shall have all the assistance and advantage that it is possible for a dean of Christchurch to give him." In the winter of 1749 three boys, who all subsequently became famous, appeared in the *Phormio*: Colman, who played the part of Geta; Lloyd, that of Demipho; and Hobart, afterwards conductor of the Italian Opera, who played Antipho. Garrick frequently witnessed the entertainment, and took such interest in the matter that he suggested the designs of the scenery which was employed, until Professor C. R. Cockerell replaced them by canvases more elegantly and appropriately illustrated.

Just thirty years ago there was a talk of abolishing the play. A memorial was addressed to the dean and chapter of Westminster, signed by nearly six hundred old Westminsters, who recorded their "firm and deliberate belief, founded on experience and reflection, that the abolition of the Westminster Play cannot fail to prove prejudicial to the interests and prosperity of the school." The same protest which the contemplated termination of the Westminster Play created may well be called forth now, by the attempt that is undoubtedly being made to bring about the compulsory removal of Westminster School. Happily there is reason to believe that it is an attempt, which is only another instance of that spirit of agitation for agitation's sake which has latterly become an academic mania, and to which, as we have seen, all schools are in turn subject.

BY THE RIVERSIDE.

OUR ANGLING CLUB.

It would hardly be supposed that anglers, the most clubable of men, could exist without clubs and societies of their own. Yet for many years they did so, and relied for angling converse on chance encounters by lake and stream; on the morning chat on the way to sport, so neatly utilised by writers on angling from Walton to Davy; and on the gossip over the pipe which succeeded the plain and wholesome meal at the country inn. Between railways and the general determination of mankind towards club life, a better state of things has been brought about. It was pleasant enough under the old style to dine on that excellent arrangement of a fowl known as a spread-eagle, with curly bits of bacon nestling under its outstretched wing, and succulent mushrooms lurking in the dish, washed down with nut-brown ale, and supplemented by a steaming tumbler of toddy. It was pleasant too to fight our battles o'er again, to tell how we landed that heavy barbel, and by what inconceivable chance we lost the big chub. Through the lemon-laden mist and the denser wreaths of nicotian cloud, fishes loomed vast and huge, their weight increased too with each tumbler, and the circumstances attending their capture put on a more picturesque guise with each successive charge of cavendish; till at last measures of size became, as it were, elastic and ill-defined, and we marched off to the little chamber with lavender-scented sheets and vine-covered casements then and there, to sleep the dreamless slumber of the just man who has passed a day in the sweet, fresh air of the country. This was passing well before the increasing pace of life extended to anglers, or, to put the case more accurately, the pace of railroads enabled thousands whose occupations forbid more than one day's holiday at a time, to indulge their natural taste for sport. With the great increase in the number of fishermen, and their desire to get home to bed at night, still existed the love of comparing notes after the day's sport; a desire inextinguishable in the true sportsman. It was found to be but dull work, starting early in the morning by candlelight to catch a train, and then returning home late at night to find wife asleep, fire gone out, and not a soul to whom to show the basket of handsome jack or plump roach. The angler felt that this would not satisfy his sportsmanlike aspirations, would never

gratify the yearnings of his soul. All hunting animals are vain of the proceeds of their skill. Perhaps the most domesticated animal next to man—to wit, the cat—is the most striking instance of this peculiarity. Ordinary puss is not content unless she shows the mouse or rat she has killed to her master; and country folk know the poaching cat, who slinks out at nightfall and rarely returns without a pheasant or partridge to lay at his feet. The writer has known two cats of this kind very well, and as the owner of a poaching animal is not apt to boast of its powers, has no doubt that the creature is by no means rare. Mighty stalkers of red-deer, and slayers of grouse, pheasant, and partridge, are to the full as vain as puss. They court the applause of the sporting world by forwarding long accounts of their astonishing bags to the daily newspapers, which somehow find room for them. So does the lordly salmon-fisher condescend to inform the public, through the medium previously alluded to, that he has landed on such a day five salmon and two grilse, and on another seven salmon, whereof one weighed forty-two pounds. If this passion then be so deeply rooted in the bosom of the hunter of wild creatures, what marvel is it that the Thames fisherman, whose patience when in pursuit of a trout throws that of Chingachgook into the shade, should wish his skill to be recognised; if not of all men, as is that of the mighty Nimrods aforesaid, yet by those of his own craft, in the same punt with him as it were? It is this entirely natural and laudable feeling of vanity extending from cat to king, from roach-fisher to deer-stalker, that is at the bottom of angling clubdom, albeit this institution has developed another spirit—that of emulation. In olden times—be it said without disparagement of the honour and veracity of our forefathers—the weight and quality of captured fish was talked about but loosely; and anglers, when recounting the deeds of their brethren, would, not unfrequently, by the partial closing of one eye, indicate that the statements of their friends should be taken with—well, a little seasoning. This was when angling was a thing of byways; but the Thames angler has changed all this, and he and his deeds revel in the full glare of publicity. This is encouraged by the extension to angling of the system of competitive examination, and the institution of prizes for the biggest fish of various kinds, and the

greatest takes in public and private waters. Out of the desire to exhibit has grown the desire to compete and to excel. It is not sufficient for Piscator to have his wholesome walk to the brookside, and his pleasant shade by the sweet silver streams; to enjoy the “good air and sweet smells of fine fresh meadow flowers,” the “melodious harmony” of birds, the prospect of the “swans, herns, ducks, waterhens, coots, and many other fowl with their brood,” and other delights enumerated by Burton in his “adaptation” of the views of Dame Juliana Berners. Piscator Londinensis, in addition to all these delights and the actual sport of catching fish, is nothing if not an exhibitor, a competitor, a prizeman. It is a sublime thing to land an eighteen-pound pike, for instance; and a solemn thrill of joy passes through the person at the other end of the rod, as the great monster of the weed-grown backwaters first shows his dappled side. The joy of the man who takes a big pike is not simply of the present, but is gilded by anticipations of the future. As the big fish makes one more savagely sullen effort to escape the toils, and appears to the mind’s-eye of his captor tons heavier than he really is, in that mind’s-eye are scenes of triumph to come. The ambitious Stubbs sees that this one great stroke will wipe out all the deeds of his rival Dubbs. The latter has taken all the prizes for jack-fishing hitherto, for the biggest fish and the greatest take; but this eighteen, computed at twenty-five, pounder will wipe the eye of Dubbs, and put an end to his story of his big jack, with all its wealth of detail, and of repetition. “What,” asks Stubbs, as *Esox Lucius* makes another sullen, dogged attempt at resistance, “what be his sixteen and seventeen pounders compared with my prize fish? Where is his vaunted perch now, where his heavy roach? This, I flatter myself, will settle Dubbs once and for all.” It is not often that Stubbs proves an Alnaschar, for a heavy jack once well hooked is, in skilful hands, a tolerably certain capture.

Leaving Stubbs to kill his fish, to receive that sweet incense of adulation which Thames puntmen know how to administer, and to carry his fish triumphantly to the club, let us ask for the moment at which of the numerous metropolitan angling clubs the monster jack will be shown and admired and his captor envied. At the present moment there are about eighty angling clubs or societies in and

around London, and fifty-three of these are associated together under the name of the United London Anglers, and pay social visits to the Head Centre. The fifty-three united clubs number collectively about seventeen hundred members, and the other clubs about five hundred. All trades and professions have representatives among the metropolitan angling societies. Tinkers, tailors, soldiers, sailors, doctors and lawyers, bakers and parsons, painters and plasterers, are all on the rolls of these institutions. Mr. J. J. Manley, in his pleasant book on Fish and Fishing, considers that to the anglers regularly enrolled must be added at least one thousand regular practitioners who belong to no clubs, and five hundred more who reside in the vicinity of the Thames, the Lea, and other waters within about twenty miles of London; giving a total of about four thousand steady anglers in and around the metropolis.

Angling clubs are a great feature in modern fishing, as they are not confined to the London district, but are found at Nottingham, Leeds, and many other towns of the North and Midlands. In these essentially sporting localities intense interest is excited by a fishing sweepstake, or a match for the championship of the river and a substantial stake in hard cash. London, however, claims the merit of creating that section of clubland which is devoted to angling. The metropolitan clubs have increased with extraordinary rapidity. They hold their meetings, weekly or bi-weekly, at a congenial hostelry, the landlord of which is sometimes one of the fraternity. Considerable fancy has been exercised in the choice of titles for these societies, in which the craft is combined with the locality, and also with alliterative suggestions of a brotherly and convivial character. In Finsbury meets a society which has evidently received its quaint title from some satirist of the fraternal relation. It is called the Amicable Brothers. The fraternity of others is clearly suggested by alliteration, as the Bloomsbury Brothers, the Walworth Waltonians, and the Knights of Knightsbridge. Others suggest political sympathies, as the Prince of Wales, the Reform, the St. Pancras Working Man's Society; and many bear purely local appellations. Oddest, perhaps, of all are those which have perpetuated the memory of some forgotten sign, as the Golden Barbels, the Hearts of Oak, and the Silver Trout; and they should be

right good fellows who compose the Brothers-Well-Met, the Odds and Evens, the Convivial, and the Nil Desperandum angling clubs. The club-rooms in which these merry brethren of the angle congregate are decorated with preserved fish, duly embalmed and mummified in glass cases. At their meetings they show and weigh in their fish, and the take of each exhibiting member is duly recorded on the books of the society, with a view to the prizes given by the club and by private individuals. It would be difficult to give a list of the articles deemed fitting rewards for skill in angling. Almost anything from a punt to a pencil-case is considered appropriate, but the most popular form of an angling prize is either a watch, a silver teapot—very insidious this, as tending to appease the wrath of Piscator's wife when he is away fishing—a purse, a cigar-case, or sets of fishing-tackle. Fishing-boats and waterproof coats are also frequently given as prizes, as are coals at Christmastide. Even a lively young porker, and that most intelligent and affectionate of animals, a young donkey, have appeared in the lists of prizes.

Apart from regular club and private matches are the angling battles which, like brass-band contests, rabbit-coursing, and the mysterious game of knurr and spell, appear to owe their existence to the licensed victualling interest. The enterprising landlord of The Tom Tiddler's Arms, be that hostelry situate on Thames or Trent, Colne or Lea, gets up the whole affair and provides the prizes, contriving to lose nothing by his well-calculated liberality. Not long ago, in the North Midlands, the host of a fishing-inn offered six prizes, ranging from twenty-four to four pounds sterling, to be fished for, and his friends provided one hundred and seventy additional baits for the angler. The competitors, who had to pay three shillings and sixpence entrance each, numbered no fewer than five hundred, and they were stationed at twelve yards apart; the array of fishermen thus occupying a distance along the waterside of three miles and a half. The day being a suitable one for fishing, the aggregate of fish taken was very large, the winner of the first prize scoring nineteen pounds one ounce and a half. The arrangement was perfect, and everything passed off well, without any unseemly wrangling. Since the great event just recorded, an interesting contest took place on the Lea. Two hundred and

seventy-six anglers entered for a great roach match, and the day being unfavourable, the winner got the first prize of forty pounds with thirteen ounces and a half of fish—thus worth four-fifths of their weight in gold.

How far angling contests, private matches, and the more innocent form of club cumulative competition tend to render a man contemplative and philosophical, I will not pretend to determine. To my unbiassed mind it would appear that angling for a hundred pounds a side is not calculated to make "our souls holy and wise, by heavenly thought and meditation;" and that "the music of the falling weir" (by-the-way, the weir does not fall, although the water does) would to my mercenary ear have a chink as of rouleaux, if I had a cool hundred on. It would be a remarkably cool hundred too if it were a match at pike or roach, and I doubt much whether my "joyful eye" and mind would be "wrapt above the starry sky." What too would become of my "gentleness of spirit and pure serenity of mind," while I sat with stiffening fingers and nose rapidly assuming a cerulean hue, watching my own motionless float, while mine adversary was filling his basket? I fear me that my patience would not be "more than heart can wish," and that the sensations experienced in less tranquil scenes would be revived in my bosom.

Passing by these thoughts on the doubtful aspect of angling considered as a fine art, which have sufficed to doze away an hour in the railway carriage, let us hasten to our fishing society, the oldest of the kindred associations now flourishing in the metropolis. It is thirty-nine years since our fishing society was founded, and under one and another roof it has flourished ever since. To find it we will turn out of the Strand, near the Adelphi Theatre. The hostelry hard by the famous oyster-shop where the wits and jokers, wittingly and case-hardened listeners, of the last generation spent their evenings or rather nights, is the lair of the angler. Hither we come to show our fish, to weigh in, to discuss the state of the wind, the preternatural brightness of the water, and the marvellous tenacity of the weeds, which refuse to clear off and expose the mighty pike to our snares. Round the walls of our haunt are the trophies of successful angling, nobly presented to the society by individual anglers, that their glory might be made manifest. In the case at the end

of the room is a noteworthy instance of an improved method of preserving the memory of a fish deemed worthy of that honour. It is a pike, taken by Keene, from Rapley Lake, cast by Mr. Frank Buckland, coloured and presented by Mr. H. L. Rolfe. It is a monster fish of thirty-five pounds, and reproduced in a manner which reduces the mummy fish round to complete insignificance. Among these, however, there are many curious specimens. There is a trout, from Great Lake, of ten pounds eight ounces; three Wandle trout of over five pounds each, an eight-and-a-quarter-pound Thames trout, and a Gillaroo trout from Ireland. The array of pike is very fine, including one twenty-five-pounder, and others of twenty, twenty-one, and fifteen pounds. There is a nine-pound pike-perch from the Elbe, and a genuine Colne perch weighing three; crucian carp, and Thames carp, and a mighty barbel from the same river—a nine-pounder. Great roach and dace too are there, handsome but tasteless chub, bellows-like bream, and slimy tench. Not the least agreeable possession of the club is a pike's head fashioned into a loving-cup, a brave ornament to the festive board.

Shortly after half-past eight we begin to assemble: those who have been out fishing to show what they have done, and to talk about it; and those who have stayed at home, to listen, to put searching questions, to admire and to criticise the various takes of fish, set out on trays, and placed on tables arranged round the room. The angling specialists are soon discovered. The jack-fishers collect around the many trays of jack; the fanatical roach-fisher cannot be roused from apathy until a score of roach averaging about a pound apiece appear, and almost take his breath away. He looks carefully at them, and then becomes more resigned, for he finds that not one of them can touch the two-pounder already recorded in his favour, and that therefore his chance of the one biggest roach prize is not yet imperilled. It must not be understood from my remark that anglers are a greedy or mercenary folk, for they are nothing of the kind, and would gladly spend ten pounds to win a prize worth one. Our club prizes are in money, and are twelve in number, to wit: for the largest Thames trout, to weigh not less than five pounds; for the largest trout from any water (except the Thames), to weigh not less than two-and-a-half pounds; for the largest grayling, pike, perch, roach, chub,

bream, dace, carp, and tench. These may be called our fish prizes, but we have no fewer than forty-seven extra prizes given by various members, under all kinds of conditions. Thus, Mr. Frank Buckland promises a prize of one guinea per pound for the first salmon taken from the Thames within City jurisdiction; Mr. Bernard, a salmon-rod for the first grilse or salmon from the Thames; and Mr. Rolfe offers a painting to the member who shall catch the greatest weight of fish during the year. Other members give prizes for the greatest weight of particular kinds of fish taken during the season and on certain days, and a kindred society, the Walworth Waltonians, previously mentioned, offer a couple of guineas for the largest barbel. Moreover, we have two competitions every year. One of these is for the heaviest weight of barbel taken by one or two members angling from the same punt, with one rod and line each, on the same day, and at any fishing-station on the Thames; the date to be fixed by the committee. On this particular day of October—to wit, the 15th—there has been a jack competition for a prize instituted in honour of a defunct member, a good angler, if ever there was one. We are, therefore, all anxious to see what has been done, and there is plenty of time for the contemplative brethren to enjoy themselves, for the lists are not closed to competitors till it strikes midnight at St. Clement Danes, and many come from afar. One member, an enthusiast of the first water, has been up betimes, and has played terrible havoc with the jack at Mapledurham, fishing with the snap. He sits now in his glory, with his captives laid out before him in their hideousness of outline and golden-bronze beauty of colour. He thinks he has a good chance, for his eight jack weigh well enough to promise him an easy win; but his mind is not at rest, for three more slayers of jack are known to be yet abroad, and their score is yet to be taken. His fish have been well and duly weighed and entered, and are attracting the admiration of all save one gloomy youth, who, content with the gross weight, objects that there is not one prize fish among them. This young gentleman is a prize fisherman. He loves to go for big things, and sets little store by the time he takes in accomplishing them. "My Thames trout," he tells me, "was not got without trouble. Three weeks I was after him every day. I knew he was there, and I determined to have him. These

great trout, as you know, always feed at a fixed hour, and half an hour before his feeding-time I was at my post day after day, and week after week. At last I got a chance, as I thought, and missed him—missed him after three weeks' pursuit. But I went again the next morning, and I had him sure enough. I like prize fish, and like to think of the time I had with my big chub. You've heard of my big chub?" I should think I had. I could tell the story of that big chub myself; but I may not be uncharitable. I strive to laugh, I recollect all that Johnson and Byron, Peter Pindar, and other superficial people have said against anglers; but my instinct of the nineteenth century—the century of the straight line—refuses to laugh at my prize-fishing friend. The man who can go out day after day for six, or even for three weeks, to catch a fish which, when caught, is not half so good as a salmon, must be a dangerous opponent. I fear not at all your dashing opponent with his "long sword, saddle, bridle, whack-falderol." The quality called *élan*, dash, and so forth dismays me not a whit in an opponent, but I confess I fight shy of your quiet man, who does not thrust or squeeze, but keeps steadily pushing on and on till he has got whatever he wants, be it a trout or more negotiable treasure. I make up my mind that I will not quarrel with the man who waits three weeks for a Thames trout.

While we have been discussing the merits of paternosters and live bait, gorge-fishing, ledgering, and spinning, tray after tray of fish has appeared at the board, and much excitement has been produced by a handsome take of chub and another equally brilliant catch of roach. We dwell fondly on these fish, "as if we loved them," and point out the beauty of this, the plumpness of that, and the splendour of that particular victim. From time to time we talk of strange fishes—the monsters of brook and lakelet. We get up an animated discussion on the probable existence of the finless fish of one mysterious loch, and the tailless trout of another not very well mapped-out tarn. The latter strange animal is said to resemble an ordinary trout, save that his tail appears to have been cut round and singed by a lamp or candle flame. Another suspicious circumstance concerning him is that he is only to be caught on certain occasions, and when a gillie well acquainted with his habits accompanies the angler. A sceptic

present says that the whole story reminds him curiously of that of Antony and Cleopatra; and he is only brought to reason by the remark that, as there are eyeless fish, a tailless fish is not impossible. A civil engineer attempts to prove that a fish could not swim without a properly organised tail, and the conversation becomes warm as I fling the name of Darwin, like an apple of discord, into it. But our fury is short-lived, the arrival of another tray of jack, and the materials for drowning dull care, disperse the gathering clouds, and harmony is once more the order of the good fellows at our angling club.

"NOBBINS."

"WELL," said Mr. Chummer, knocking out his pipe against the spittoon and taking a final melancholy sip at his tumbler—we are in the smoking-room of The Equinoctial Hotel; a dusky, underground place, frequented by gentlemen of the sock and buskin—"well, you may talk about the claims of art and all that sort of thing, and the drama as a school of culture; but if I'd my time over again, I should drop all that and go in for nobbins. You don't understand; well, I'll explain. A good many years ago," continued Mr. Chummer, "being at the time out of an engagement and at dead low water, Calker, the theatrical agent, sent for me and asked if I would mind going down for a night to take the 'Robber chief' at a popular fête somewhere in the North—Rubblesfield, I think they called the place—a temporary theatre in the grounds; Miss Maccall, of Theatre Royal, Manchester, and other talent to support me. Terms, five guineas and expenses. The five guineas were there chinking in Calker's hands. That settled me; for at that moment I did not know where to look for a shilling, the wife ill in bed, the cupboard bare, and the landlady bullying for her rent. I mention this just to show you what a temptation it was, that handful of ready money. Anyhow, I agreed to go, that day week, a Saturday. The five guineas down; expenses after the performance.

"You may know how quickly a fiver dries up after a good long drought, and when I reached King's Cross Station one misty, raw morning, there was only just enough left to pay my fare third class to Rubblesfield, and a few shillings for casualties. But then there were expenses

to come, so that it would be hard if I did not come back next day with a pound or two in my pocket.

"As we came near Rubblesfield all the dead walls were covered with huge posters—'Royal People's Park,' with a great picture of a red balloon in a blue sky, and underneath in huge letters, 'Mr. Harry Nought's terrific ascent'; a good deal smaller, 'Mr. Charlton Chummer, of the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane, &c. &c., London'; bigger again, 'The Breakdown Troupe of Ethiopian Minstrels, late of St. Jingo's Hall, London,' and numerous other attractions.

"My entrepreneur met me at the station; a big, roughish kind of man, Barker by name, and the landlord of a large public-house connected with the Royal People's Park. He wore a gloomy, ill-used air, as if the world were not going well with him. It was a gloomy kind of a place too, this Rubblesfield; more cinders to be seen than grass, even in the country, and a great pall of smoke over it, stretching away for miles. The park turned out to be a good-sized field, enclosed with tall boards; a sickly shrubbery maze, and a big wooden booth, devoted to drinking. The public-house was at one end; a good-sized place, but with a dirty, neglected look about it.

"Where's the theatre?" I asked, looking about all round, but seeing nothing to answer to it. Mr. Barker led me to a wooden scaffold in the middle of the field. The dressing-room was underneath on the bare soil, and you climbed up to the stage by a ladder, for all the world as if you were going to be hanged. 'Why, this won't do,' I said.

"It'll have to do," said Barker, doggedly.

"Where's the Manchester lady?" I asked. "What does she say to it?"

"Mr. Barker hummed and ha'd, and admitted, at last, that the lady was not coming.

"There had been a bit of a bungle about the job," he said. He had meant the five guineas to cover the whole of the play. He could afford no more, and had expected a whole company for his money.

"And now," he said, looking me over disparagingly, "there's nobbut thee."

"For all I was hurt, I admired the terseness of the man's language.

"Nobbut me," I repeated in melancholy accents. I could not assure Mr. Barker that I was a host in myself. I did not feel like it. "I can't act single-handed, Mr. Barker," I said.

"Then would ye like to give me back

the brass and go whome?' cried the landlord eagerly. But that arrangement did not suit me exactly. We stood there looking at each other and at the empty scaffold, Barker scratching his head and I pulling at my moustache. Then Mr. Barker broke the silence.

"Happen you can do something to please the folk. Can you dance, mister?"

"The polka," I said, at that time a popular dance.

"Nay, it must besomething stronger than polka," rejoined Barker. "They're partial to clogs in these parts," looking at my feet suggestively. He meant wooden shoes, with soles six inches thick and bound in solid brass. I shook my head.

"Suppose," I hazarded, "that I make a neat apology for not giving the play, and recite Macbeth's soliloquy or something out of Hamlet?"

"What'syon like?" he asked, doubtfully.

"I gave him a specimen of my craft.

"Why, lod," he said, when I had finished, "they'd tear thee to pieces if thou'd naught better nar that to spout for 'em."

"It was now just noon, and there broke out all round a booming, buzzing noise, that made the ground tremble and set every nerve in the body quivering. 'What's this noise?' I asked.

"It's only buzzas," replied the landlord, contemptuous of my ignorance, "for chaps to quit their work. They'll just cut home and clean themselves and then we shall have 'em here. I hope you'll be ready for 'em, mister, for they're a rough lot of chaps to play with I can tell you."

"With that he left me to my own reflections. And these were not of a very cheerful order. I could certainly never give an entertainment all by myself, I had never attempted anything of the kind before. And yet I felt sure that if I failed to hit the popular taste, I should be roughly handled by my audience, while this rough handling would be courtesy itself to what I should get if I declined to appear at all. Then I was slapped sharply on the shoulder, and turning round I confronted an Ethiopian, a real darkie with a banjo.

"Ain't we in a jolly hole!" he said, with a chuckle. "The balloon won't go, the Breakdowns ain't coming; won't there be a jolly row!"

"He went on to explain that the gas company had declined to finish inflating the balloon till they were paid for the gas; that Barker, who had looked to the people's shillings to defray this and other expenses, had suddenly been distrained

upon by a hostile creditor, bailiffs holding the wickets and taking the gate-money—taking but not inclined to part with it. The Ethiopians had got wind of this, and failed to put in an appearance. As for darkie himself, he had come on the off chance of making a trifle. "But if the man can't pay you?" I suggested. Sambo winked, nodded, laughed; 'Nobbin,' he cried, and disappeared.

"Certainly, it was a gloomy look-out. If I had not taken the man's money, I too should have vanished. It seemed very unlikely that I should ever touch a farthing for expenses, and how to get home, and the sick wife expecting me, and the irascible landlady—oh, I felt bad, I can tell you. The people were flocking in now, and certainly they answered Mr. Barker's description of a rough lot. They might have cleaned themselves 'a bit,' but still bore on their honest faces many traces of the week's labour. They were pitmen, hammermen, puddlers, black in the face, and brawny of arm. As time went on, I grew more and more anxious. Nobody was at hand to take the direction of the entertainments. People took to amusing themselves by throwing the oyster-shells which decorated the maze at each other's heads, and then they began to cluster thick as bees about the enclosure that held the half-inflated balloon. I saw Mr. Harry Nonght frantically haranguing the crowd. Very shortly afterwards, the sovereign people were walking about with little bits of oiled silk stuck into their hats like wedding favours. These were pieces of the balloon.

"Then the cry rose for the minstrels, and my friend with the banjo essayed to stand in the breach. Happily he was as nimble as the monkey of his native wilds, and now he owed his life to his agility in swarming over the park palings. The appetite of the people for mischief grew by what it fed upon.

"After that I heard a cry for myself, 'Choomer, Choomer!' a solitary cry, at first, like an old hound when he hits off the scent. Next moment the whole mad pack would have been upon me.

"And then Jupiter Pluvius pulled me out of the fire. A tremendous downpour of rain began, and cleared the field like magic. All had rushed to the big refreshment-booth, now crammed to overflowing with the shouting, bellowing crowd, whose liveliness was only damped, not quenched.

"The landlord came to me with tears in his eyes, and begged me to save the whole place from being wrecked, by doing some-

thing to keep the people amused. They were calling for 'Barker' now, but Barker was not willing to come. The banjo-man, who had more pluck than I, and had returned from his sudden flight over the palings not a bit discouraged, urged me to go on, and promised to support me. At last, in desperation, I threw off my coat, snatched up the landlord's apron and a pint mug, and rushed upon the stage. The people rose at me, thinking it was Barker himself, and meaning to rub him out; and so, when I burst into a patter song, and they saw that it was not Barker, but the London player taking him off, the enthusiasm was immense. You could hardly hear a word of the song for the roars of applause, and when I added some extempore verses about the balloon and the fête, and Barker's red nose, the delight of the people culminated.

"I rushed from the stage at last amid thunders of applause and loud calls for a repeat, and almost fainted away in the darkie's arms. 'You must go on again,' he said. 'I can't do it,' I whispered, my voice gone with fatigue and excitement. 'Golly, man,' he cried, 'you mustn't miss this. Landlord's in the cellar hidden behind the barrels. The bailiffs is up the chimney, trembling for their lives. There's only you and me in the game; you do the patter, old chap, and I'll do the nobbins.' 'What are they?' I asked, thinking he meant the bones, or something of that kind. He laughed, incredulous of my ignorance, and pushed me upon the stage.

"This time, after I had sung two more extempore verses, with great applause, thumping of tables, banging of brass-bound clogs, and a tempest of shouts, I saw Snowball's oily face working its way through the crowd, his long arms pushing about his battered old hat, which fortunately had a good sound top, and the coppers pouring into it in cataracts. 'Nobbins!' he cried, 'Nobbins, my noble swells!' and the crowd caught up the catchword, 'Nobbins! nobbins!' roared out in one tremendous shout; and I fancy that any man who had denied his nobbins that night, would have been roughly handled by his pals. I don't think there was anybody in that vast crowd who did not shell out something; and when, on the inspiration of the moment, I struck up a verse, the chorus of which was 'Nobbut Nobbins,' all joined in, and enthusiasm reached its height.

"My own enthusiasm was at a very low ebb, for I felt sure that Snowball had

melted away by this time, and that except for the memory, nothing would be left of nobbins. But I did my dusky friend injustice. He was waiting to receive me at the stage-door, he led me down a dark passage right into the air outside, and in a few minutes we were seated in the snug little bar-parlour of a tavern known to my friend, with refreshments before us, and, reverently covered over with a silk pocket-handkerchief—our nobbins. It took a long while to count; a great pile of coppers, sixpences and threepenny bits without end, a few shillings, and one half-crown; in all fifteen pounds odd, which we divided. Before we had finished counting, we heard the sharp clatter of hoofs, and the ring of military accoutrements—the dragoons called out to quell a riot at the Royal People's Park. But I crept quietly up by the night train to London, arriving at my own humble home in the early morning, where my poor sick wife was counting the hours of my absence. I think the physic that did her most good that visit, was—nobbins."

STRANGE WATERS.

BY R. E. FRANCILLON,

AUTHOR OF "OLYMPIA," "PEARL AND EMERALD," &c. &c.

BOOK II.

CHAPTER VI. CLARI EATS.

LUNCH, at Hinchford, was announced by a gong. And when, to-day, the thunder that proclaimed so important an event rolled through the white drawing-room, it seemed to act like the breaking of a spell, under which four persons had been bound. The first to obey the disenchantment was, naturally, Lady Quorne; the last was Mademoiselle Clari. But the last was the first to speak.

"I am glad to hear the gong," she said. "I am hungry."

"Then let us all go down together," said Lady Quorne. "You will let me hear you sing presently, Miss March—won't you? It is a long time since we met, Reginald—you and I; not since you used to come in your holidays to Derehurst. I must make your wife's acquaintance one of these days." She was speaking as they went downstairs. "Ah, here is Lord Quorne; this is my cousin Reginald—the clergyman at Deepweald, you know. Miss March, let me introduce you to Lord Quorne."

Celia let herself be introduced formally; but she was not regarding with all the

awe due to him the distinguished amateur of cucumbers. Her heart was beating painfully. Not only had she felt the actual grasp of Clari upon her arm—a sin that, however unintentional, was almost beyond the reach of confession at home—but she found herself in the presence of him towards whom she had vowed silence; Walter Gordon himself was talking to the earl.

"Fräulein Celia!" said Walter. "Miss March and I are old friends—fellow-students," he explained to the countess. He looked at Clari enquiringly.

"Mademoiselle and I have sung at each other," said the prima donna, with less expression in her voice than usual; for there was dramatic intention, often inappropriate enough, in the way she said the most commonplace things. But there was no indifference, but the intensest earnestness in every tone, when she added, "And it has hungered me."

"To hear her again?" smiled Lady Quorne. "There, Miss March—there is a compliment for you."

"No, to eat," said Clari.

Walter ought to have known the prima donna by heart, by this time. And he was beginning to suspect her of wearing her soul less openly upon her face than he had once believed. He had at least once seen the tigress loose in her; and the sight had been a piece of insight for him. A man seldom observes a woman so closely, as circumstance had brought him to observe Mademoiselle Clari. And now there was no sign of any of the expressions that he would have expected to see. She did not look ill-tempered, as a jealous woman might who had found a rival. She did not look good-humoured, as a woman of tact would, in like case, have taken care to appear, nor yet indifferent, nor yet patronisingly kind. He could not help watching her as she eat and drank, no less observantly than while she was breakfasting at The Five Adzes. She was something of a gourmande, as all real artists are, and to-day her appetite showed that she had not spoken of being hungry without good reason. But there was a something about even the way in which she eat and drank to-day as if even that process was typical. Why not? Intense people express themselves in the way that is nearest to hand, even if it be no more than in cutting the wing of a fowl. A man eats in one way when he is going to sleep after his meal; in another when he is going to fight a battle, though there

may be but the barest distinction visible to uninterested lookers-on. And somehow Walter fancied that the wing of that particular fowl was representing other food for the knife of the prima donna. She eat as if she meant it—but what it meant was not easy to say.

When we read of a woman, fired with passion, rushing to the piano and finding a safety-valve for her over-wrought feelings by dashing into a maddening whirl of song, the outlet seems natural. But the outlet is equally natural when the piano is represented by anything else that comes nearer to hand. There are very clever women who find it in sweeping down the homes of innocent spiders or in scrubbing floors; they do not feel the less vehemently because they cannot afford to keep a grand piano. And, though there is a shame-faced theory to the contrary, spiritual excitement and bodily hunger are constant companions, when the lungs are as sound as Clari's. She might have her moods and her passions, but she threw on them, beyond all question—as Walter Gordon could not help thinking.

He was sitting opposite to both the women, whom he had been led to think of together, and compared them. He had been growing very observant lately: Clari had more than merely touched his imagination with her infinitely varying moods and caprices that ended in smoke, her tragic thunders in calm air, and her bursts of passion that ended in—luncheon. Imagination, when once roused, must lead somewhere, it is the highway to the heart, as everybody knows; but it does not follow that she who opens the road gate reaches the goal. She may point the way for some companion who could never have opened the gate, but may make far sweeter flowers spring along the road. How was it that at Lindenheim he had found out that Celia March was interesting, piquante in her shy way, amusing to talk to because she listened, modest, sweet-tempered, all that a girl should be—except beautiful? How was it that now her beauty of face struck him as if he had been absolutely blind at Lindenheim? Of course she had grown, and at her time of life the years give beauty instead of taking it away, but even still her chief beauty, as always, lay in her eyes; and if they were beautiful now, they must have been beautiful then, for eyes do not change after childhood. They seemed to him even more beautiful than Clari's. They wanted both flame and heat, but they were sweeter and calmer; to spend one's

life watching Clari's eyes, thought Walter, would be like reading some new book that keeps the mind in a state of perpetual curiosity and excitement from page to page; Celia's, like reading one that one knows by heart and is not weary of for the second or third time of reading.

Observation is certainly a fine quality for a painter, who has only to do with things as they seem. It is worse than Will-o'-the-Wisp to men who wish to know things as they are.

Giulia Clari lunched like a gourmande, as she was. Noëmi Baruc thought and thought like a gourmande too, who sees a fair table spread before her, and with revenge written for the *pièce de résistance* in the menu.

I have sought to keep no secrets—this is not a story with a mystery. I cannot help it if anyone has forgotten the name of Noëmi Baruc, and wonders who was this unnoticed guest at Hinchford. It does not follow that, because people assume it, prime donne are born full fledged—are fruits that have never blossomed. It is true they do not often grow on conventional trees. Sometimes they are picked from wayside hedges, in the shape of beggar girls who wander about from country fair to country fair. Another may be a stage-struck contessa or marchesa. Another is born in the purple—that is to say, on the stage. Another is picked up ripe from a southern market-place; another from some obscure Ghetto. Such had been the destiny of Noëmi Baruc, the pupil of Andrew Gordon.

The girl from the Ghetto, with the ear-rings dangling before her in the air, shut her eyes, that she might see them better in the dark, and followed them blindly. She let Il Purgatorio, her master, and La Purgatoria, her mistress, drift away like waves that pass one who journeys up the stream, forgetting that she wore on her back a mantilla that, to say the least of it, was not her own. The Carnival had cut her off from her old life in the Ghetto as sharply as if it had been death itself. She simply could not go back. The will of the enchanter was upon her, who had promised her all the kingdoms of the earth and the glory of them for a song. And then, if she went back, she knew very well that, if she escaped an actual beating, she would be doomed to bread-and-water for some days to come. She was not fond of a bread-and-water diet, even in those days.

In short, the stranger with the strange

name said, "Come," and she went with him.

How it was that the police authorities had nothing to say to the departure from Rome of a stolen mantilla of Spanish lace with a girl inside it, he best knew—unless, indeed, Il Purgatorio, the money-lender, had his own reasons for not putting justice en rapport with his mantilla. At any rate, before night was over she had left the black shadow of the Colosseum, where for the first time she had opened her lips in song. Before noon Rome itself was out of sight, and the next day saw her in a strange city. Such sudden changes absolutely dislocate lives. In two short days she was Noëmi Baruc as little as if she had never borne the name, and had never heard the tongue of La Purgatoria.

And she was not only in a strange city. She was in Paradise. To consider the nature of her relation to the young man who had so summarily carried her there never for a moment occurred to her. He was the enchanter who was to give her her heart's desire: she, the slave of the ring—that is to say, of the earrings, and of all that they typified. In some unknown way she was to sing herself into the heart of the world. Meanwhile, for the cheap price of studies which to her were mere child's play, she had purchased all pleasant sights and sounds, freedom from household slavery, food and drink of the best, a soft bed, and all such common comforts as to her were undreamed-of luxuries. A little study for a few hours a day was a cheap price indeed to pay; to exchange her lace mantilla for a barbarous bonnet and mantle, after the fashion of Paris, was well worth twice the labour, in her estimation of things.

She missed nothing; for she had never had anything to miss except such things as gave the piquancy of contrast to present luxury; just as a man whose work compels him to get up earlier than he likes misses his week-day necessity on Sunday morning. She had a lodging to herself—a room in a palace. Her master had another to himself; but she had more company than ever in her life before, for he visited her at regular hours twice every day. And he was with her, in a sense, even when he was not with her; the mesmeric force that had compelled her to follow him formed a sort of atmosphere in which her life developed itself.

But, so far, she did not feel her life a slavery. It was all too new; and, compared with the service of Il Purgatorio,

the service of Andrew Gordon was absolute freedom. He set himself to educate her, not only in song. In most things he did not succeed very well. His pupil was very far from clever, and was a little old for learning. Had not his patience been infinite, the alphabet itself would have been to her for ever a mystery. Books were not ear-rings even; and there was not one word about herself in any of them. But when it came to song !

Infinite impatience could not have kept pace with her. It seemed as if her throat had been sealed up all her life, and that now the seal was broken. As if song had been gathering in her for years, in order to overflow and burst out as soon as space had been made by the merest prick of a needle. It must have seemed part of the magic, had it not seemed so natural to her to sing. It was her one talent; but it made up by its excess for the lack of every other. She was not one for whom rules are made; she out-raced system, and left law behind her. She sang to herself, or to her audience of one, as if every note were to buy her a diamond, of water in proportion to beauty of tone.

And so for some time, unmeasured by her, the days went on in such delightful contrast to those of the Ghetto, that she was unaware of their barren monotony. But she was not the only inhabitant of the palace which the marchese, its owner, let in lodgings, contenting himself with three or four rooms on the second floor.

One day—for the first time—she received a visitor. He was a man of imposing appearance so far as stature, high shoulders, embonpoint, and a profusion of jewellery could make him; whose features recalled memories to her mind, that were connected with foul smells and the other characteristics of once upon a time. His eyes were bright and dewy, and his features rather eastern than southern in their contour.

"Signorina," he began and continued in fluent but vile Italian, "I am Prosper."

"Prosper?"

"Yes, I. Only last night I arrived from Moscow."

"From Moscow?"

"Mademoiselle has never sung? No. But walls have ears, mademoiselle—the ears of Prosper. Frankly, I want singers; you want an impresario. I am not a man of words. I come, I hear, I engage. Me voici, vous voilà—voilà tout."

Noëmi felt her heart beat. The wizard had fulfilled his promise; the glory was at hand. She had never heard either of

Prosper or of Moscow, but if she was to have the whole world at her feet, there was no need to trouble herself about biography or geography in detail.

"No," she said, "I have never sung."

"No, or I should have heard you; and no, or I should not have engaged you. When I want singers I do not go to the old; I discover the new. That is my principle. It is a grand début I offer you, mademoiselle—a grand début, for which many would come to me on their knees. You shall have good parts; one whole season; more if you succeed. And you will: I do not engage failures, mademoiselle. I will give you five hundred francs; and when I say I pay, I pay."

"Five hundred francs?"

"Yes, five hundred, mademoiselle."

"And for the season?"

"For the season."

Have I said that Noëmi Baruc was bred and born in the Roman Ghetto, and in the house of Il Purgatorio? It requires no literary talent to be aware that a single diamond worth having is not to be bought for five-and-twenty pounds.

"Yes, I will sing. And you will give me five thousand francs—"

"For one season?"

"Every week, signor."

Andrew Gordon's pupil was decidedly improving. Prosper raised his hands and cast up his eyes.

"Five thousand francs—a week! Who ever heard of such a thing? Why Saffi herself gets no more in London!"

The girl's eyes shone. "Then I will go to London."

"Do you know what you say? Why, any girl in her senses would pay me—pay herself to have a début that I give you and pay you for! Think, mademoiselle."

"I think," said Noëmi. "I think I will sing for five thousand francs every week."

"If you can get them—no doubt! Perhaps you will find someone to give it you. But if you do—it will not be Prosper. No. I will go farther before I engage, mademoiselle." But he did not make any sign of going. Noëmi did not answer a word, but simply looked as stubborn as a mule. For a moment, a sort of duel of looks passed between the two.

But Noëmi must not be credited with more business talent than was due to her. What she really thought was, "If I cannot sing for all I want, I will not sing at all." And she merely said five thousand a week because Prosper had said five hundred the

season. She had made a long shot; but was beginning to find it tell.

"Well," said Prosper, "I do not bargain—I engage. Say one thousand for the season. It is double what I ought to give; but never mind."

"Five thousand," said Noëmi.

"Are you a mad woman?"

"If it is mad to say five thousand francs a week—yes, signor."

Prosper groaned with what might have been amazement, or despair, or both combined. But his groan brought him no inch nearer the door. Another duel of eyes passed between them—something like the game of moro, where fingers are counted and a game seems to be won or lost by clairvoyance, rather than by commonplace seeing. We dull Northerns and Westerns do not understand such things. We have to say "checkmate" before we know whether white or black has won. But cleverer races bargain for sport; not because they do not know by instinct, from the third or fourth move of the opening, which is going to win.

"She is worth six thousand francs a week. She knows it, and knows that I think so. And if I don't give her five, somebody else will give her six; and I shall lose a prize. Take five thousand a week, and I shall have made a good bargain; and you know that too, and thank you for not asking six"—so said the silence of Prosper, while his hands and eyes went up still higher in the needful semblance of horror and despair.

"I did not know I could get so much, but I see now. He would give me anything I asked—checkmate!"—said the silence of Noëmi.

"One thousand a week. There!" said Prosper. No bargain must be made without bargaining.

"Two thousand. Say three. Well, then, I don't mind ruin for just once—four." He paused.

The Ghetto blood understood the pause by instinct. Custom demanded some concession on her part, or there would have been no bargain.

"Four thousand five hundred," said Noëmi, carelessly.

Prosper stopped despairing. So long as she took off a centime, honour was satisfied.

But so exciting had been a process, of

which no Englishman may hope to understand fully either the delicate points of etiquette or the charm, that neither had been aware of a third party to the duel, who stood by with pale face and sternly angry brows.

"The signorina is engaged to me," said her master, coldly.

"Pardon, monsieur," said Prosper, politely; that is to say, as politely as a man can who fears he has bargained in vain. "I have the word of mademoiselle. May I ask the honour of an introduction, monsieur? I am Prosper."

"The signorina will not sing for a paltry five thousand francs a week—no, nor ten," said Andrew Gordon, firmly. He did not observe how Noëmi's eyes shone. She believed implicitly in the magic of her master. Was it the purse of Fortunatus itself and all Golconda that she was to sing for? "She will sing for art—if you ever heard of such a thing."

"Monsieur le père ou monsieur le mari?" asked Prosper, falling into his native language out of the villainous Italian he had been speaking to Noëmi. "Mister the father or mister the husband? Monsieur is English, I perceive."

Andrew Gordon considered for one moment, no more. He must seize upon some claim to bind her to him in such wise that no impresario in all Europe might so much as tempt her from him, and from the service to which he had devoted her.

"Her husband," he answered. "Good morning, monsieur."

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